

National Social Studies Standards

The standards are from: National Council for the Social Studies. The standards are for all age levels.

Standard 1 - Culture

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity. Human beings create, learn, and adapt culture. Culture helps us to understand ourselves as both individuals and members of various groups. Human cultures exhibit both similarities and differences. We all, for example, have systems of beliefs, knowledge, values, and traditions. Each system is also unique. In a democratic and multicultural society, students need to understand multiple perspectives that derive from different cultural vantage points. The understanding will allow them to relate to people in our nation and throughout the world.

Standard 2 - Time, Continuity and Change

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves over time. Human beings seek to understand their historical roots and to locate themselves in time. Such understanding involves knowing what things were like in the past and how things change and develop. Knowing how to read and reconstruct the past allows one to develop a historical perspective.

Standard 3 - People, Places, and Environments

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments. Technological advances connect students at all levels to the world beyond their personal locations. The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions assists learners as they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world.

Standard 4 - Individual Development and Identity

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity. Personal identity is shaped by one's culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. Examination of various forms of human behavior enhances understanding of the relationships among social norms and emerging personal identities, the social processes that influence identity formation, and the ethical principles underlying individual action.

Standard 5 - Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions. Institutions such as schools, churches, families, government agencies, and the courts all play an integral role in our lives. These and other institutions exert enormous influence over us, yet institutions are no more than organizational embodiments to further the core social values of those who comprise them. Thus, it is important that students know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained and changed.

Standard 6 - Power, Authority and Governance

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance. Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society, as well as in other parts of the world, is essential for developing civic competence. By examining the purposes and characteristics of various governance systems, learners develop an understanding of how groups and nations attempt to resolve conflicts and seek to establish order and security. Through the study of the dynamic relationships among individual rights and responsibilities, the needs of social groups, and

concepts of a just society, learners become more effective problem-solvers and decision-makers when addressing the persistent issues and social problems encountered in public life.

Standard 7 - Production, Distribution and Consumption

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. People have wants that often exceed the limited resources available to them. Unequal distribution of resources necessitates systems of exchange, including trade, to improve the well being of the economy, while the role of government in economic policymaking varies over time and from place to place. Increasingly these decisions are global in scope and require systematic study of an interdependent world economy and the role of technology in economic decision-making.

Standard 8 - Science, Technology and Society

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology and society. Technology is as old as the first crude tool invented by prehistoric humans, but today's technology forms the basis for some of our most difficult social choices. Modern life as we know it would be impossible without technology and the science that supports it. This theme draws upon several scholarly fields from the natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and the humanities for specific examples of issues and the knowledge base for considering responses to the societal issues related to science and technology.

Standard 9 - Global Connections

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence. The realities of global interdependence require understanding of the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies. Analysis of tensions between national interests and global priorities contributes to the development of possible solutions to persistent and emerging global issues in many fields: health care, economic development, environmental quality, universal human rights, and others. Analyzing patterns and relationships within and among world cultures, such as economic competition and interdependence, age-old ethnic enmities, political and military alliances, and others, helps learners carefully examine policy alternatives that have both national and global implications.

Standard 10 - Civic Ideals and Practices

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic. An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies. All people have a stake in examining civic ideals and practices across time and in diverse societies as well as at home, and in determining how to close the gap between present practices and the ideals upon which our democratic republic is based.